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Letter dated 24 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement regarding the referendum in Montenegro, issued on 23 May 2006 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gerhard **Pfanzelter**
Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 24 May 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Statement regarding the referendum in Montenegro issued on 23 May 2006 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union welcomes the successful organization of the referendum on the independence of Montenegro. The European Union notes the assessment of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights that the referendum was conducted overall in line with OSCE and Council of Europe commitments and other international standards for democratic electoral processes. The conduct of the referendum was a sign of the maturity of the political forces and people of Montenegro.

The European Union calls on all sides concerned to accept the result. For its part, it will fully respect the decision of the people of Montenegro.

The European Union calls on Belgrade and Podgorica to take up, as rapidly as possible, a direct dialogue on the way ahead. The European Union stands ready to support this dialogue.

The European Union reconfirms the European perspective of the Western Balkans on the basis of the stabilization and association process.

The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Croatia,* the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* and Turkey, the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the stabilization and association process.